

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06 SCS-03 SCA-01 OMB-01

ACDA-07 SAM-01 SCCT-01 IO-13 DHA-02 SY-05 SSM-03

USSS-00 SAB-01 AID-05 PER-01 /116 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1197

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 19

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

CIA WASHDC

COMSIXTHFLT

COMPHIBRON FOUR

COM THREE TWO MAU

CTF SIX ZERO

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CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N N I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6374

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

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SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 18: MILITARY LULL AND ABSENCE OF

POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC PROGRESS PORTEND WORSE TIMES AHEAD.

REF: BEIRUT 6351

1. SUMMARY: IN FACE OF MILITARY PRESSURE AND DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION, PALESTINIANANS FOR NOW DIGGING HEELS IN, REASSERTING CONDITIONS FOR ARAFAT-ASSAD SUMMIT. EVEN LOWER LEVEL PLO DELEGATION TO DAMASCUS NOW POSTPONED PENDING NEW JALLOUD EFFORT WITH SYRIANS. RUMORS OF INVASION OF WEST BEIRUT CIRCULATING, BUT Wafa CRITICIZES LEFTIST PRESS OF JULY 17 FOR SPREADING FALSE STORY. JUMBLATT SAYS US HAS GIVEN SYRIA ONE MONTH TO COMPLETE "PLOT" TO DIVIDE AND SUBJUGATE LEBANON. "NATIONAL UNION FYONT" TALKS TO ARAFAT AND JALLOUD, BUT CRITICIZES TIMING OF "ISLAMIC GROUP" VISIT TO DAMASCUS. ARAB LEAGUE MEDIATORS STILL ACTIVE. RENEWED FIGHTING AT TELL ZAATAR. OTHER FRONTS RELATIVELY QUIET. INCREASED SYRIAN MILITARY PRESSURE IN MOUNTAINS EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP FACING DECISIVE HISTORICAL CHOICE, IN VIEW OF BEIRUT PRESS, BETWEEN SUBMISSION TO SYRIAN DOMINATION AND RADICALIZATION. FOR THE MOMENT, PLO IS STILL DIGGING IN. POLITICAL DEPARTMENT CHIEF FAROUK KADDOUMI REASSERTS DEMAND THAT SYRIANS EVACUATE SO FAR BEFORE DIALOGUE WITH SYRIA CAN BEGIN. PFLP-GC FOR ITS PART STATES CONDITIONS FOR DIALOGUE IN AN-NAHAR AS: 1)COMPLETE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL; 2) CESSATION OF SYRIAN SUPPORT OF CHRISTIANS; 3) FREEING OF "POLITICAL PRISONERS" IN DAMASCUS; AND 4) PALESTINIAN FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND ACCROSS BOUNDARIES OF LEBANON AND SYRIA. DEPARTURE OF DAMASCUS OF LOWER-LEVEL PALESTINIAN DELEGATES (SITREP, JULY 17), SUPPOSEDLY TO PREPARE PALESTINIAN-SYRIAN SUMMIT MEETING, ITSELF NOW POSTPONED PENDING VISIT TO DAMASCUS BY LIBYA PREMIER JALLOUD TO EXPLORE SYRIAN RECEPTIVENESS TO PALESTINIAN DEMANDS. JALLOUD DEPARTED BEIRUT EARLY JULY 18.

3. BEIRUT RIFE WITH RUMORS OF INVASION BY LAND AND
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SEA OF WEST BEIRUT. RADIO MONTE CARLO EARLY JULY 18 REPORTED "INVASION" TO BEGIN MONDAY, JULY 19. HOWEVER, IN UNPRECEDENTED STEP, PALESTINIAN NEWS AGENCY Wafa LATE JULY 17 CONTRADICTED AL-MUHARRUR REPORT OF INVASION PLANS (SITREP, JULY 17) AS "COMPLETELY FALSE" AND GENERATED BY CIA AND ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN INTELLIGENCE. AL-MUHARRIR ITSELF

JULY 18 TRIES EXPLAIN AWAY REPORT AS EFFORT TO FOIL PLOT, MOBILIZE LEBANESE AND STIMULATE ACTION BY USSR TO PREVENT US PARTICIPATION. L'ORIENT LE JOUR DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO INVASION THEORY, BUT SPECULATES THAT SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN "SECOND ROUND" WILL NECESSARILY REQUIRE GREATER SYRIAN FORCES, AND WILL HAVE TO WORK ITS EFFECT BEFORE SEPTEMBER 23, DATE ELIAS SARKIS PRESUMABLY WILL ASSUME OFFICE OF PRESIDENT, IF PARTITION IS TO BE AVOIDED.

4. JUMBLATT 17 JULY TOLD JOURNALISTS HE HAS INFORMATION TO EFFECT THAT US HAS GIVEN SYRIA AND CHRISTIANS ONE MONTH TO COMPLETE CONSPIRACY. FIRST STEPS, HE SAYS, WILL BE CHRISTIAN REOCCUPATION OF BEIRUT HOTEL AREA AND CENTRAL BANK (TO STEAL FOREIGN RESERVES), AND CONTINUED CHRISTIAN/SYRIAN OPERATIONS IN METN AREA. US-MANIPULATED CONSPIRACY, HE SAYS, WILL INCLUDE MOVEMENT OF SYRIAN FORCES INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON, GIVING ISRAEL EXCUSE TO INTERVENE AND ANNEX AREA SOUTH OF LITANI RIVER. THEREAFTER, PLOT IS TO "INTERNATIONALIZE" CRISIS, BRING ISSUE OF PALESTINIAN STATUS TO UN, THEN FORM SEPARATE MARONITE STATE AND ANNEX PARTS OF EASTERN LEBANON TO SYRIA. PALESTINIANS WILL GET SMALL AREA BETWEEN BEIRUT-DAMASCUS ROAD AND LITANI RIVER. US, JUMBLATT SAYS, HAS PROMISED SYRIA FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON GOLAN HEIGHTS IN RETURN FOR SERVICES RENDERED IN LEBANON.

5. "NATIONAL UNION FRONT" (OF MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN POLITICIANS WHO HAVE NOT TAKEN SIDES IN WAR, LED BY EDDE AND SALAM) WAS VISITED BY ARAFAT AND JALLOUD JULY 17. SALAM REASSURED ARAFAT OF HIS DEVOTION TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PALESTINIAN CAUSE, BUT WAS GENERALLY PESSIMISTIC ON CURRENT SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED HOPE FOR SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN RAPPROCHEMENT, AND SAID PREPARATIONS ALREADY UNDERWAY FOR SUBSEQUENT LEBANESE-LEBANESE DIALOGUE. NEW "ISLAMIC GROUP" EXPECTS SEND DELEGATION TO DAMASCUS JULY 18, INCLUDING ABDALLAH YAFI AND TAKIEDDINE SOLH. EDDE CRITICIZES VISIT AS BADLY TIMED IN LIGHT OF SYRIAN INTRANSIGENCE.

6. ARAB LEAGUE SEC GEN RIAD AND FONMINS OF TUNISIA, BAHRAIN AND KUWAIT EXPECTED VISIT KFOUR FRONT LEADERS JULY 20. FRONT LEADERS EXPECTED SEEK ARAB LEAGUE COMMITMENT TO CAIRO ACCORDS ON PALESTINIAN STATUS. ARAB LEAGUE DEPUTY KHOLI MEANWHILE EXPECTED VISIT DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT BEGINNING JULY 18.

7. MILITARY SITUATION REMAINS INDECISIVE. AT TELL ZAATAR, RIGHTISTS CLAIM TO HAVE TAKEN A PALESTINIAN COMMAND POST. LEFTISTS CLAIM TO HAVE COUNTERATTACKED RIGHTIST POSITION TO EAST OF CAMP DURING AFTERNOON JULY 17. PALESTINIAN DOCTOR IN CAMP MADE URGENT APPEAL TO RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT FOR MEDICINES, STATING SOME 1000 WOUNDED FIGHTERS IN CAMP AND ALREADY 500 OTHERS DIED FOR LACK OF PROPER MEDICATION. SOME LOCAL LEFTIST MILITARY GROUPS APPEAR WATCHING SEAFRONT AREA ALONG CORNICHE IN VICINITY US EMBASSY MORE CLOSELY, PERHAPS IN RESPONSE TO INVASION RUMORS.

8. ELSEWHERE IN BEIRUT AREA, TRADITIONAL FRONTS SAW RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF VIOLENCE FEATURING ARTILLERY DUELS, OCCASIONAL INFILTRATION ATTEMPTS AND SNIPER FIRE. TELL ZAATAR AREA FIGHTING INCLUDED ALSO NABAA, SIN EL-FIL, DEKOUANE, AND DAHR-AL-JAMAL. ESTIMATED 47 KILLED IN AREA JULY 17, WITH 68 WOUNDED. LOW-LEVEL OF COMBAT PERMITTED INCR HTTSLDESSING # OF CONFRONTATION LINE BY NON-COMBATANTS AT NATIONAL MUSEUM.

9. ELSEWHERE IN COUNTRY, FIGHTING CONTINUES IN ALEY-KAHALE AREA.) SYRIAN FORCES HAVE REPORTEDLY TAKEN SOME PALESTINIAN/ LEFTIST POSITIONS NEAR OUYOUN EL-SIMANE AND AINTOURA
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IN MOUNTAINS, AND SYRIANS NOW PROVIDING HEAVILY ARMED ESCORTS FOR CIVILIAN TRAFFIC BETWEEN ZAHLE AND METN AREA. SPECULATION IS THAT AREA WILL SEE INCREASED SYRIAN PRESSURE IN NEXT FEW DAYS. IN NORTH, NO CHANGE AT TRIPOLI. PALESTINIANS CLAIM TO HAVE REPELLED ARMORED SYRIAN ATTACK ON NAHR EL-BARED CAMP. IN SOUTH, SYRIANS STILL AT JEZZINE.
SEELYE

NOTE BY OC/T: BEIRUT 6374; #PARA. 8. AS RECEIVED.
CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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